

February 26,2008

Public Hearing for Raised Bill No.5610

Chairmen Colapietro and Stone, and members of the General Law Committee,

I am DonTuller from Tulmeadow Farm. I'm first Vice President of Connecticut Farm Bureau. My family has been farming in West Simsbury, Connecticut since 1768. Among other things, we raise vegetables to sell in our farm store with locally grown fruit and locally produced food products.

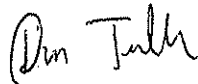
I'm here today to urge the defeat of Raised Bill 5610. I don't know what problem this bill is meant to correct, but I can see where passage will bring big problems to my business and a lot of others as well.

Look at how this bill is *worded*- "each person, handler, firm or corporation", "each container or package of food offered for sale" Is container and package defined in this bill? What does offered for sale mean, does it mean not behind the counter? If I have a pint of blueberrys or cherry tomatoes or a bag of apples on display in my farm store I'll have to put a sell by date on it? Farm Stands and Farmers Markets are my main concern, but this will make selling fresh fruits and vegetables more difficult and expensive for everyone. How does one determine the sell by date? Is there a reference in this bill to a standard? I pick my tomatoes every day, do you expect me to take them to a food lab for testing to determine shelf life? The only thing we do have a standard for is what the label should look like. What food safety or consumer safety disaster did I miss that would warrant this remedy?

What is the fiscal note on this bill? How is Consumer Protection going to inspect the thousands of products and businesses? How many inspectors are to be added? What would be the cost of compliance for food sellers? How much will this add to the cost of food for the Connecticut consumer?

Passage of the bill will raise farmers' costs and make it harder to sell locally grown fruit and vegetables...and raise food costs for every consumer. Do you really need to be doing that ? I urge the defeat of this bill.

Thank you.



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